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Japan Christians Plan Aid for A-Bomb Victims

(Tokyo) - Japanese Christians are launching a three-year programme to aid victims who are still suffering from the effects of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The new programme, directed by Japan Church World Service in cooperation with the National Christian Council of Japan, is a result of a recent intensive survey in the two cities by a team led by Dr. Sam H. Franklin, professor of Christian ethics at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary.

According to the report, "the range and depth of misery caused by atomic bombing... strengthens the impression that in many ways this tragedy is qualitatively unique in its effect on human life and in the demand it makes on society as a whole to alleviate the suffering of its victims".

Centres will be maintained in the two cities to coordinate relief work already being done, to distribute supplies, to carry on case work with individuals and families affected by the bombing, to do group work with youths, to give vocational training to bomb victims and to widows and orphans, and to carry on Christian evangelism.

According to the survey committee, "there is a tremendous area of need where practically nothing is being done". In Hiroshima, 870 families of bomb victims receive government help; in Nagasaki, the figure is 491. But, officials state, five or six times that number need similar help.

E.P.S., Geneva

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WCC-YWCA Discuss Problems of Women

(Geneva) - As the result of a three-day study in Geneva on the Christian approach to women's questions, subjects about which "Christian groups have specific contributions to make" have been selected for "concentrated action" by the Department on the Cooperation of Men and Women in Church and Society of the World Council of Churches.

The study group, called jointly by the WCC department and the World YWCA, met at the John Knox House. At the same time, the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations was in session. The group suggested special efforts toward establishing a minimum age of 16 for marriage for both boys and girls, the free consent of both sexes in choosing a marriage partner, and the public registration of the marriage. The group was told that in many countries thousands of girls and boys have no say in selecting the person they will marry, while countless girls, many of them only six years of age, are virtually sold into marriage. It was also decided to work for the abolition of ritual practices and operations, especially in Africa, "which defile and mutilate the physical integrity of thousands of girls, and affect their emotional, psychological and mental growth, as well as their physiological well-being for the rest of their lives".

Under the heading of political rights, the group called for "the access of women to public office and functions both in the state and in the Church".

As a first step in following up the study, the Department of Men and Women of the World Council is asking representatives if their churches have considered these questions and taken a stand before their governments. The department is also asking for other current concerns that should be presented to the Commission on the Status of Women of the United Nations. E.P.S., Geneva

CCIA Official Writes on Persecution in Colombia

(Chicago) - The downfall of the Rojas Pinilla regime in Colombia has brought a decrease in violence against Evangelicals or Protestants, but "the repressive decrees of the discredited dictatorship remain", according to an article in the April 9 Christian Century, non-denominational weekly.

The article is by the Rev. Dr. Richard M. Fagley, executive secretary of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, a joint agency of the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches.

In his article Dr. Fagley says that "while the incidents of persecution, so repugnant to conscience, have occupied the limelight, they do not pose the fundamental issues of religious freedom".

"The basic issue is the legal disabilities decreed under the Rojas Pinilla dictatorship in 1953-54, for these go to the heart of the question of religious liberty in a country of Roman Catholic predominance, as the diverse incidents of violence do not."

The article claims that there are three types of legal or "pseudo legal" disabilities against Evangelical Christianity. They are: "those designed to eliminate it entirely in two-thirds of the national area; those designed to curb severely, in the rest of Colombia, its freedom to evangelise; and those designed to restrict its freedom to teach".

In reference to incidents of violence, Dr. Fagley says: "On the larger canvas of virtual civil war the tragic motif of religious persecution was scratched in - Evangelical chapels desecrated and destroyed, Evangelical schools forcibly closed, individual Protestants terrorised, thousands made homeless by reason of their Christian allegiance".

Yet in this tragedy there has been a victory of the spirit, for Evangelical Christianity has continued to grow in Colombia, its members and sympathisers today numbering 60,000 persons."

Dr. Fagley says that the original Roman Catholic proposal for an objective inquiry into the alleged persecution and discrimination and into the underlying social conditions in Colombia received "a prompt and affirmative response from American churchmen who had been in touch with leaders of the Evangelical Confederation of Colombia (CEDEC) over a period of years".

He referred to a proposal made five years ago by Msgr. Luigi G. Ligutti, executive director of the U.S. National Catholic Rural Life Conference. The proposal has been revived in a recent issue of the Jesuit weekly, America.

"Over many months there were quiet explorations to clarify the objectives of such an inquiry, to assure that it would cover the legal as well as the sociological aspects of the issues and that it would have a composition and sponsorship mutually acceptable to Protestant and Catholic leaders."

Dr. Fagley indicates continued concern that the inquiry go forward "in a way calculated to further remedial action". He says, however, that the basic denials of religious freedom in Colombia are "clearly reflected in the unrepented decrees of the recent dictatorship". E.P.S., Geneva

Trial Ordered in Congregational/E & R Merger Suit

(New York) - A suit against last June's merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Church has been ordered to be brought to trial by a federal judge in New York.

Refusing to dismiss the suit, brought by four Congregational churches and several laymen and ministers against the United Church of Christ, Judge Archie O. Dawson told both sides that it was "unfortunate" that ministers and laymen "who purported to abide by Christian principles should engage in this long and expensive litigation".

Following the court's action, Dr. James E. Wagner and Dr. Fred Hoskins, co-presidents of the new United Church of Christ, said that the ruling does not affect the denomination. They said the judge "did not decide any issue of fact one way or the other. There is no injunction against the continuation of the union. The United Church is actively in force and will continue its work." E.P.S., Geneva

Two US Fundamentalist Churches Consider Merger

(Cincinnati) - A merger of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America and the Pilgrim Holiness Church has been recommended by a ten-member joint commission of the two groups.

The commission said it found no "insuperable barriers" to merger, and added that doctrinally the two bodies are both in the Wesleyan tradition of fundamental early Methodism. The two churches have a combined membership of about

90,000 in 2,000 widely scattered congregations in the United States.

The suggested plan will have to go before the General Conferences of the two groups. The Pilgrim Holiness Church holds its meeting this June, while the Wesleyan conference is scheduled for June, 1959. E.P.S., Geneva

UK Baptist Union Approves IMC/WCC Integration

(London) - The Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland has gone on record as "seeing no objection in principle to the integration of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council".

At the same time, the Union said it agreed that further thought should be given to working out forms of association with the proposed Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC. The Union added that it hoped the Third Assembly of the World Council would be postponed until 1961 so that the member churches and councils of the WCC and IMC respectively could "engage in serious efforts" to inform their constituencies concerning integration.

The Executive Committee of the WCC voted at its meeting in February to recommend that the Assembly, originally scheduled for 1960, be postponed until 1961. The final decision will be made by the WCC's Central Committee at its meeting in Denmark in August. E.P.S., Geneva

Scandinavian Primates Accused of "Misrepresenting" Hungarian Church Life

(Geneva) - "I regret to state that your letter reveals complete ignorance of the laws governing the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, as passed by various synods, and also of the laws of the Hungarian People's Republic," writes Dr. Janos Horvath, head of the state Ministry of Church Affairs in Budapest.

The letter is written in reply to the presiding bishops of the Lutheran Churches in Scandinavia, who, on February 21, sent a second letter to Dr. Horvath urging him to allow Bishop Laszlo Ordass and Bishop Zoltan Turoczy freedom to exercise their functions in the Lutheran Church in Hungary (see EPS No. 9).

Ignorance of these laws, continues President Horvath, had led the bishops to "false conclusions and mis-statements". President Horvath expresses regret that he cannot give the Scandinavian primates a detailed report "on the laws governing the Hungarian state and churches and on the problems arising". He declares that Hungarian Lutherans are quite capable of solving their own problems without any "help" from outside, and that "help" so far sent from abroad had merely caused confusion.

He describes the "unfounded and often somewhat brutal revelations of the Lutheran World Federation in the press and on the radio" as "expressing nothing but pressure and Western propaganda", and says they have not increased the prestige of the LWF. E.P.S., Geneva

Lutherans Active In Hong Kong Relief

(Geneva) - The Lutheran World Federation's annual report on its relief work in Hong Kong in 1957 shows that its Department of World Service contributed over \$137,000 last year to relief work among refugees there. In addition the department distributed food and clothing valued at nearly \$930,000.

The money has been used for self-help programmes; for vocational training; to support students; to set up milk canteens, and to purchase handicrafts and works of art made by the refugees for sale overseas. Nearly \$48,000 has been spent on medical relief.

E.P.S., Geneva

Polish Protestants Rebuild

(Geneva) - On his return from a three-week visit to Poland, Pastor Daniel Cederberg of Sweden has reported to representatives of the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches on the progress made in rebuilding Lutheran churches in Poland.

During the current year, he said, four churches are to be rebuilt or repaired, including Trinity Church in Warsaw, which will be consecrated on June 22. Other churches which are being rebuilt are the Christophorus Church in Breslau, a church in Czetochovia for the small Protestant congregation there, and the church in Mragowo, the first one to be restored in Masuria, which is expected to be ready by the autumn. Both the LWF and the WCC have contributed to the reconstruction of these churches.

It is also planned to restore churches in Teschen, Stettin, Wodiszaw and Schweidnitz. Altogether forty-six Protestant churches, which were destroyed or badly damaged, are awaiting reconstruction. About \$35,000 will be required for this purpose.

Pastor Cederberg made the trip to Poland as the representative of the WCC and LWF.

E.P.S., Geneva

Problem of Training Protestant Teachers in Austria

(Vienna) - A teacher training college for men has been opened by the Roman Catholic Church in the Austrian province of Burgenland, spotlighting the problem of training Protestant school teachers.

According to reports from Protestants in Vienna, the government was planning to open a state teacher training college in Burgenland, but the plan was forestalled by the Roman Catholic Church.

In Austria, half the training colleges are controlled by Roman Catholics, while less than ten per cent of the school children are attending Catholic schools. In Burgenland, where 16.5 per cent of the population is Protestant, the largest proportion in Austria, all the teacher training colleges are Roman Catholic.

Austrian Protestants point out that the Roman Catholic Church is replacing the non-denominational training schools, which have existed for ninety years, by Roman Catholic schools.

E.P.S., Geneva

US Churches Protest Against Nuclear Tests

(Philadelphia) - Churches continue to speak out against the testing of nuclear weapons. In Philadelphia, at Easter, service agencies of three historic peace churches released a joint statement, first issued four years ago, calling on all countries to outlaw nuclear weapons "unconditionally and permanently". Bodies making the plea were the American Friends Service Committee, Mennonite Central Committee and Brethren Service Commission. The groups said the statement, originally published during Holy Week in 1954, "is four years more urgent" today. Declaring that "man cannot serve both Christ and the bomb", the statement said, "Let us be done with these fearful weapons, regardless of what others

do. Whether the bomb is a tool to deter or destroy, it is not the sign by which men conquer."

The executive secretary of the Methodist Board of World Peace, the Rev. Daniel E. Taylor, urged the United States to match "with positive action" Russia's announcement that it will suspend nuclear weapons tests. "We should seize upon the occasion with positive action which will burst open the statement and open up channels leading to arms limitation and further safeguards of peace", he said. E.P.S., Geneva

In Brief

Dr. Kathleen Bliss, prominent Anglican and a member of the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches, has been named as chief permanent official of a new board of education designed to coordinate the varied activities of the Church of England in the field of education. The appointment of Dr. Bliss marks the first time, according to the Manchester Guardian, that a woman has been admitted "to the higher ranks of the ecclesiastical civil service"

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About two thousand Salvationists are working in China, according to Major Yin Huong-shun, director of the Chinese Salvation Army. Major Yin said he has "soldiers" in twenty-six towns of China and Mongolia, directed from his headquarters in Peking. The Army broke off contacts with its foreign counterparts seven years ago when all Salvationists from overseas left China.

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The United Nations issued two new stamps on April 14 depicting Westminster Central Hall - one of London's best known Methodist churches - where the first General Assembly of the UN was held in 1946.

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The hand of God creating Man, as depicted by Michelangelo in a painting in the Sistine Chapel in the Vatican, will appear on a United States postage stamp commemorating the International Geophysical Year. The three-cent stamp will be issued on May 31. It is the first to use a religious theme among many being issued in connection with the Geophysical Year.

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In the United Kingdom, Dr. Martin Niemöller, president of the Church of Hesse and Nassau in Germany, speaking to several thousand persons who took part in the four-day Easter protest march from London to the Atomic Weapons Research establishment in Aldermaston, said that he regretted that theologians were not the first to condemn nuclear weapons. Pastor Niemöller told the marchers that defence measures themselves have become a form of aggressiveness and the continuance of them is "an ever-growing provocation".

* *

Greek Orthodox Metropolitan Jacobos of Mytilene, 80, died this month of a heart attack, a few days before he was to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of his episcopal consecration. Oldest in service among the bishops of the Orthodox Church in Greece, Metropolitan Jacobos became head of the island See of Mytilene in 1925.

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"The Church and Industry", a forty-page pamphlet, has just been published by the British Council of Churches. It is the report of a working committee directed by the council's Social Responsibility Department, and is an "attempt to stimulate thought and interest, rather than to present an agreed statement".

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Ten Holstein cattle have been shipped to Istanbul by Heifer Project of New Windsor, Maryland. The animals will be used to supply fresh milk for the patients at the Balikli Hospital in Istanbul, an institution of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

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The Serbian Orthodox Church will send a delegation on May 10 to Russia for celebrations marking the fortieth anniversary of the restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate. Patriarch Vikentije, head of the Serbian church, will not make the trip because of ill health.

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The Church of England has named a commission to revise the Anglican Catechism "in order that its scope may be enlarged and its language made more suitable for present conditions".

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A bill authorising the ordination of women as pastors in the established Lutheran Church of Sweden has been passed by both houses of parliament. However, the measure has to be approved by the Lutheran Church Convocation at its session next autumn. Last October the convocation voted 62 to 36 against ordination.

* *

Dr. Yngve Brilioth, Archbishop of Uppsala and Primate of the Church of Sweden, has resigned on reaching the retirement age of 67. Elections will be held in the dioceses in June to choose three candidates from among whom King Gustaf will name a successor, probably in August. Archbishop Brilioth has long been associated with the ecumenical movement, and is a former chairman of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

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The Rev. E. Philip Eastman, a British Congregationalist, has been named general secretary of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation. Now assistant secretary of the Free Church Federal Council of Great Britain, Mr. Eastman will head the London office of the For, a Christian pacifist organisation. For nine years Mr. Eastman was a staff member of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs.

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Christian life in the German Democratic Republic is being increasingly menaced by attacks of "militant atheism", according to a statement from the Council of the Church of the Union, which met in Berlin on April 1 - 2 to discuss preparations for the All-German Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany, late this month. The council approved "The Church and Education" as the theme for the Synod, and also asked for the consideration of the many problems connected with youth in the DDR (see EPS No. 12).

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Leaders of the Socialist Party in the German Democratic Republic are calling for more intensive propaganda in favour of the state-sponsored secular youth dedication. By July, 1958, they are seeking to enlist 50 per cent of the youths in the confirmation age-group for the 1959 youth dedication.

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At the Universal Exhibition in Brussels, the Austrian Church will show a film, provisionally titled "The Quiet Workers", in the ecumenical pavilion. It has been produced with the assistance of the Austrian Ministry of Education and in close cooperation with the Evangelical Film Guild and the Film Department of the Council of the Evangelical Church. The hour-long film will be shown in German and English.

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In a speech in Bielefeld, Germany, Professor Hans Asmussen has criticised visits of Protestant church delegations to Russia. Professor Asmussen also said he was against a plebiscite on the question of nuclear armament of West Germany. The question, he said, is so complex that it cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no".

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Delegates from churches in West Germany who recently visited the USSR at the invitation of the Russian Orthodox Church celebrated Easter with the Lutherans in Riga Cathedral. The Easter sermon was preached by Dr. Ernst Wilm, President of the Church of Westphalia. A week later the delegates attended two Easter services of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, celebrated by the Patriarch Alexius and Metropolitan Nikolai.

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The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Formosa has sent a protest to the government of Nationalist China on Formosa, pointing out the serious consequences of a decree passed by the government forbidding the use of Bibles printed in "western" characters. If the decree were enforced it would mean that a large proportion of the Christians in Formosa could not read the Bible, because they cannot read the characters used in the Mandarin language.

E.P.S., Geneva

Recent PeriodicalsInternational Review of Missions

The April International Review of Missions reports in detail on the Assembly of the International Missionary Council which was held in Ghana from December 28 to January 8. Included is an account of the meeting and a report by the Rev. Gwenyth Hubble on the thinking of the five groups into which the Assembly was divided. Two papers are included which were presented in plenary session: The Christian Mission in Asia Today, by U Kyaw Than of Burma, the administrative secretary of the East Asia Christian Conference, and Changes in the Patterns of Western Missions, by Professor W. Freytag of Germany. Dr. Hla Bu, chairman of the Burma Christian Council, contributed The Christian Encounter with Buddhism in Burma, the paper which he read to the Assembly group studying the approach to the non-Christian faiths. The Rev. Göte Hedenquist, director of the IMC's International Committee on the Christian Approach to the Jews, wrote the article The "Dialogue" Between Christians and Jews. In The Church in Angola the Rev. Gladwyn M. Childs presents some impressions of the situation and prospects there.

Writers from Christian bodies outside the IMC are also represented. The Rev. David J. du Plessis writes on Golden Jubilees of Twentieth Century Pentecostal Movements, and the Rev. Harold Lindsell of the United States contributes An Appraisal of Agencies not Cooperating with the International Missionary Council Grouping. Accompanying it is an article by Dr. Norman Goodall of the Joint IMC-WCC Committee on Evangelicals and the WCC-IMC.

In addition to regular features, the contents of the April Review include the text of the Ghana resolutions accepting "in principle" and for further study and interpretation the plan of integration between the World Council of Churches and the IMC, and the Revised Directory of IMC constituent councils.

The Ecumenical Review

The April issue of the World Council of Churches quarterly devotes most of its space to a discussion of the layman and his role in the Church. The issue opens with an article on The Role of the Laymen in the Ancient Church, written by Professor George Huntston Williams of Harvard. It is followed by The Ecumenical Movement and the Role of the Laity, by Dr. Kathleen Bliss of the United Kingdom, The Ministry of the Laity in the Church, by Archpriest N. Afanassief of Paris. Other articles on the same subjects include Ye Are the Salt of the Earth, by Professor P. Ricoeur of Paris, Christendom in a Secularised World, by Dr. Hans Hermann Walz of Germany, and The Laity in the Apostolic Church, by the Rev. Hans Ruedi Weber, executive secretary of the World Council's Department on the Laity.

A feature of the issue is the article, Some Illusions and Errors, written by Dr. Ernest A. Payne, general secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland and vice-chairman of the WCC's Central Committee. The article answers attacks on the World Council regarding its action during and after the Hungarian emergency in 1956 and criticisms from the small dissident group known as the International Council of Christian Churches.

The Ecumenical Movement, Retrospect and Prospect is by a leading figure in that movement, Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, who has just retired as executive secretary in the US of the World Council.

The issue includes the usual Chronicle, Diary, book reviews and notices of new publications.

E.P.S., Geneva

